

**CALENDAR ITEM
C107**

A Statewide

04/23/15

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RA 26814

S Statewide

R. B. Greenwood

**CONSIDER APPROVAL OF A NON-EXCLUSIVE GEOPHYSICAL
SURVEY PERMIT ON TIDE AND SUBMERGED LANDS
UNDER THE JURISDICTION OF THE
CALIFORNIA STATE LANDS COMMISSION**

APPLICANT:

EGS Americas, Inc.
Attn.: Mr. Eric Roach
10901 Roosevelt Blvd. N., Suite 500D
St. Petersburg, FL 33716

BACKGROUND:

EGS Americas, Inc. has applied for a statewide offshore Geophysical Survey Permit covered under the California State Lands Commission's (Commission) Low-Energy Offshore Geophysical Permit Program (OGPP). This Permit is issued to qualified companies to perform geophysical surveys of the ocean bottom for purposes including, but not limited to:

- Scientific research, including surveys of near-shore sand erosion and deposition, seafloor changes, and seafloor topography and bathymetry;
- Surveying existing pipelines to assess any structural damage or spanning;
- Identifying and avoiding seafloor hazards and faults when designing pipeline and cable-laying projects, reducing the likelihood of ruptures due to these hazards;
- Surveying existing fiber-optic cables and other seafloor structures and utilities to determine how well they are buried;
- Developing maps of hard bottom and essential fish habitat or cultural resources indicating where the placement of permanent or temporary objects (e.g., cables, anchors) should be precluded;
- Searching for the locations of historic shipwrecks, other sunken boats, and airplanes; and,

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- Supporting and auditing dredging operations in harbors and navigation channels.

Low-energy geophysical surveys conducted under the OGPP authorize the use of electromechanical (e.g., echosounders, side-scan sonars, subbottom profilers) and passive equipment (e.g., magnetometers, remotely operated vehicles [ROVs]). The use of high-energy equipment (e.g., airguns, water guns) is expressly prohibited by the OGPP Permit. Under the general terms of the OGPP Permit, the Permittee is required to post a \$50,000 surety bond and provide Commission staff advance notification of operations, specifications of equipment to be employed, a Marine Wildlife Contingency Plan, and a Spill Contingency Plan. The Permittee will also submit post-survey reports, including records of observations and/or incidents. Upon request, Commission staff will receive copies of all data derived from any and all surveys under the permit.

PROPOSED PERMIT APPLICATION AND RECOMMENDATION:

EGS Americas Inc. is a subsea survey and mapping company affiliated with the global EGS Survey Group. Their core survey business focuses on transoceanic subsea fiber optic cable route surveys and studies which typically require geophysical surveys and mapping for the purpose of avoiding steep slopes, rocky outcrops, geological and man-made hazards. Other survey applications include sediment transport studies, pipeline routes, archeological surveys, and benthic habitat surveys. Staff recommends approval of this data-gathering permit application.

TERMS OF PROPOSED PERMIT:

Three (3) years, beginning April 24, 2015, through April 23, 2018.

PREREQUISITE CONDITIONS, FEES AND EXPENSES:

Required fees, expense deposit, and other security have been received.

STATUTORY AND OTHER REFERENCES:

- A. Public Resources Code section 6826.
- B. Public Resources Code section 21080, subdivision (c).
- C. California Code of Regulations, Title 2, Article 2.9, section 2100.
- D. California Code of Regulations, Title 14, section 15074.

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OTHER PERTINENT INFORMATION:

1. Pursuant to the Commission's delegation of authority and the State California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Guidelines (Cal. Code Regs., tit.14, § 15025), Commission staff prepared a Mitigated Negative Declaration (MND) identified as CSLC MND 751, State Clearinghouse No. 2013072021. The MND was prepared and circulated for public review pursuant to the provisions of CEQA, and adopted by the Commission together with a Mitigation Monitoring Program on September 20, 2013 (Calendar Item 120).
2. On September 20, 2013, the Commission found that, based upon the entire record before the Commission, including the Initial Study, the MND, and the comments received in response thereto, there was no substantial evidence that the program may have a significant effect on the environment; California Code of Regulations, Title 14, section 15074, subdivision (b). A Mitigation Monitoring Program was prepared in conformance with the provisions of CEQA (Pub. Resources Code, § 21081.6)
3. Commission staff prepared an addendum to the previously adopted MND pursuant to California Code of Regulations, Title 14, section 15164, subdivision (b). Commission staff reviewed the proposed changes to the General Permit and Mitigation Monitoring Program and determined that none of the events specified in Public Resources Code section 21166 or section 15162 of the State CEQA Guidelines had occurred, and therefore, no additional CEQA analysis was required.
4. On April 23, 2014, the Commission adopted an addendum to CSLC MND No. 751, State Clearinghouse No. 2013072021, which revised the General Permit and Mitigation Monitoring Program (Calendar Item C67).

EXHIBIT:

- A. Permit Regions

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RECOMMENDED ACTION:

It is recommended that the Commission:

CEQA FINDINGS:

1. Find that the MND, CSLC No. 751, State Clearinghouse No. 2013072021, and the Mitigation Monitoring Program were prepared by Commission staff and adopted on September 20, 2013.
2. Find that the addendum to the MND, including a revised General Permit and Mitigation Monitoring Program, was prepared by Commission staff and adopted on April 23, 2014, pursuant to the provisions of CEQA.
3. Find that the Commission has reviewed and considered the information contained in the previously adopted MND and addendum, and that in the Commission's independent judgment the scope of activities to be carried out under the permit to be issued under this authorization have been adequately analyzed and that none of the events specified in Public Resources Code section 21166 or State CEQA Guidelines section 15162 resulting in any new or substantially more severe significant impacts has occurred, and therefore, no additional CEQA analysis is required.

SIGNIFICANT LANDS:

Find that this activity is consistent with the use classification designated by the Commission for the land pursuant to Public Resources Code section 6370 et seq.

AUTHORIZATION:

Authorize issuance to EGS Americas, Inc. of a Non-Exclusive General Permit to conduct low-energy geophysical surveys from April 24, 2015, through April 23, 2018, within Permit Regions I, II, III, and IV as designated on Exhibit A, attached hereto.

EXHIBIT A PERMIT REGIONS

